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A LIBRARY WEEK: INDIANA'S EXPERIENCE

By EDMUND L. CRAIG, *Trustee, Evansville Public Library, Evansville, Indiana;*
President 1920-1921 Indiana Library Trustees Association

FOURTH GENERAL SESSION

At the November meeting, 1921, of the Indiana Library Trustees Association the suggestion was made that Indiana have a state-wide library week. Each trustee present saw an opportunity of gaining the publicity necessary to put across the problem confronting his particular library and the idea, after discussion, was enthusiastically adopted by the Association. It was later endorsed by the Indiana Library Association and approved by the Indiana Public Library Commission, and a joint committee of these three bodies fixed the week of April 23-29, 1922, as Indiana Library Week. As one of its first moves, the state committee obtained the endorsement of a state advisory council composed of the Governor, the president of the state League of Women Voters, the state librarian, the president of the state Federation of Clubs, the state superintendent of public instruction, the president of the state Normal School, and several other men and women of influence in the state.

Arrangements were made with a library publishing house to furnish special tags, posters, stickers, movie slides, electros, signs, book-marks and leaflets appropriate to the week. The aid of the National Association of Book Publishers was enlisted.

The State Committee's plan of action covered:

1. A brief statement of the plan in the January issue of the *Library Occurrent*.
2. Letters from the president of the Trustee's Association to the president of all library boards and from the president of the Library Association to all librarians in the state.
3. Letters from appointed advisors in each Congressional district to the libraries of his district.
4. A proclamation of the week by the Governor, sent out through the Associated Press.
5. Talks and discussions at twelve district library meetings.
6. Tentative plans for local celebration of the week sent to all libraries.
7. Seven columns of matter in the April *Occurrent*.
8. Six one-page newspaper stories were

sent out, with blanks therein for local interest features.

9. Ten minute talk on the week by Rev. Wicks, of Indianapolis, broadcasted by radio.

When Library Week was first proposed at the Indianapolis Convention there were trustees present who said that there were already too many "weeks"; that it was an old story; that we couldn't do it as well as others who put on special weeks; that the people back home would not enter into the spirit of the thing; that the celebration would be spasmodic and only be by a few of the libraries, etc. As the venture was the first attempt of the kind in the library field, as far as we knew, those of us who were sponsor for the movement after the preliminary publicity waited in no little suspense to see what the result would be. What was the answer?

Out of the 209 tax supported public libraries in the state, 158 celebrated the week in one way or another. In addition, three small Association libraries co-operated. Of the 51 libraries which, as far as the committee has learned, did not observe the week, only 8 were in towns of more than 2500 population. All of the larger cities put on celebrations.

A big filing drawer in the office of the Public Library Commission, which was the state Committee's headquarters, was filled to overflowing with newspaper clippings pertaining to the week. One article on the growth of libraries given to the Associated Press was printed with commendation as far away as Boston, Mass., and Dallas, Texas.

What is the consensus of opinion in regard to the result of the week? All reports were favorable. I have chosen a few from different sections of the state. Mrs. W. A. Denny, of Anderson, president of the Indiana Library Trustees Association and chairman of the State Committee, writes: "I have not had a single report opposed to the Library Week activities. I feel the results very gratifying."

W. J. Hamilton, secretary of the Public

Library Commission, says: Indiana Library Week was a success that went far beyond the hopes of its most sanguine endorsers.

Ethel F. McCollough, librarian at Evansville, says: Library Week was distinctly worth while. We probably received the most value from the talks made before the civic clubs of the city and the down-town window displays.

Mary Torrance, librarian at Muncie, says: Library Week is rather strenuous I find, but very interesting. I hope the trustees will make this an annual affair, for we are getting results.

New Albany reports: No one could possibly have had a more wonderful or profitable library week than we had. The response in words and deeds we will never forget.

Just a word about how the week was celebrated locally: Mayor's proclamations, window cards, tag days, stickers on autos, posters, stickers on mail matter, inclosures in mail, special slides in theatres, open houses, literary evenings, dinners, teas, story hours, plays, poster contests, essay contests, window display contests, art exhibits, book drives, 4-minute talks in all public places, churches, theatres, schools, factories and clubs, press publicity covering news items, editorials, cartoons, electros, letters of commendation, etc.

South Bend engaged a special advertising man who had charge of press, posters and movies.

Gary had a Pioneer's Night (the city is only 15 years old), and a special Hungarian Night at Bailey Branch jammed the hall to overflowing.

An Evansville daily paper held an essay contest, three groups—5th grade and under, 6th to 8th grades and above 8th grade. Subject: "What the public library means to me." Money and book prizes were given.

Anderson began the week with a library dinner, at which 125 leading citizens were guests.

The LaPorte Library celebrated its 25th Anniversary and fifteen firms contested for best library window display.

Muncie featured a musical tea.

Crawfordsville had an exhibit of pictures of Brown County artists.

Frankfort kept open house—2600 people visited the library during the week.

Seymour had successful story hours. A

small boy, who edged his way in, when later asked if he wanted a book replied: "Naw, I don't want no book. A guy outside said you were giving away ice cream cones."

Hartford City put on a book drive. Their report shows they received 400 volumes. Five dollars worth of junk and waste paper, and 150 eggs were among the donations.

Should there be a national library week and, if so, may we profit by Indiana's experience? The time has passed when the American public library needs any defense. President Eliot, of Harvard, said last year: "Most of the evils from which modern society is suffering can be cured only by education, begun in youth but continued into adult life." Congressman Towner, in addressing this body last year, said: "There is nothing in *our scheme of government* more important than the education of the public. Whatever else may be left out, education cannot be excluded." Again he said: "It has come to be generally recognized that libraries are part of the educational system and that library service should be given to every community as a part of such a system." The National Education Association has sent out a statement saying: "The public library should be recognized as a necessary part of public instruction, and should be as liberally supported by tax as are the public schools and for the same reasons." Any activity which has a tendency to aid in such an important phase of our life is worthy of careful consideration.

Why should we not have a week each year in which the public library may be emphasized? Commencement week in our schools is an established institution. We will not get the same results each year in Indiana as this year, but the ingenuity of our library friends will find some valuable use to make of the week each year. Each library will get out of library week just what it puts in it. It is an opportunity—nothing more.

One more suggestion and I am through. Our Indiana Library Week was held too late in the year. Some of our country schools were closed and others nearing the end of the term. The summer season was almost upon us. The same amount of effort put

forth in the fall, when every one has returned from his summer vacation and when the schools, libraries and churches are en-

tering upon another season's activities, would, in our opinion, arouse the same enthusiasm and produce far more lasting results.

MISSOURI'S BOOK WEEK

CHARLES H. COMPTON, *Assistant Librarian, Public Library, St. Louis, Missouri*

FOURTH GENERAL SESSION

The success of Missouri Book Week was not due to any special effort upon the part of the Book Week Committee. It was not due to any special efforts upon the part of librarians. Missouri Book Week was a success because it had the elements of success within it, and it almost could be said that it couldn't have failed. The reason for this is that people are becoming increasingly interested in books and libraries, and newspaper men realize this. Much newspaper space was obtained with no effort on our part. For example in St. Louis three of the four newspapers, the *Post-Dispatch*, *Globe-Democrat* and the *Times* printed editorials. These editorials showed an intelligent grasp of library needs on the part of the editorial writers. They emphasized the need for county libraries,—they deplored the lack of libraries in the state.

Missouri Book Week was observed February 12-18. Briefly now as to what the committee did. In the early part of January, a publicity outline for conducting Book Week was mailed to librarians in the state. It had suggestions relating to newspaper stories, co-operation with schools, churches, and book stores, exhibits, open house at library, etc. There were about 12 suggestions, all being plans which had been tried and found successful. It was not expected that any one library would follow all the suggestions but it was interesting later in checking up to find how generally they had been used. One plan that seemed most popular especially in the smaller libraries was to have an open house during the week. Exhibits were on display. Women's club members acted as reception committees.

A suggestion for newspaper publicity which proved successful was to have prominent men and women of a community tell what books had had the greatest influence in their lives.

Large and small newspapers printed such symposiums.

Three releases were mailed out to librarians and also direct to the papers. The mimeographing and mailing of all material was handled by the state Library Commission. One release was the Governor's proclamation, setting aside Book Week. Another was a statement from the state superintendent of public instruction endorsing Book Week. The third was a statement from Mr. Bundy regarding establishment of county libraries. Naturally the Governor's proclamation received the most publicity—newspapers very generally printed it.

We have a record of 33 towns and cities which took part in Book Week, and undoubtedly there were others. More than 100 newspaper articles were received mostly through a clipping bureau, which, of course, does not clip nearly all the newspapers. For example in St. Louis there were 23 different newspaper items—making as a whole more than a newspaper page—only 8 were received through the clipping bureau. The best results were obtained in the smaller cities and towns. In the *Library Journal*, I called attention to the notable success of Book Week in Hannibal and Sedalia. Farmington, a little community, with a small library, had any amount of publicity in the papers and the greatest interest in the schools. These smaller communities used the releases which the committee sent out adding local items. In addition they put local library news of their own in the papers.

In all the three releases which the committee sent out, one fact was emphasized—namely that 89 counties in the state of Missouri had no free tax-supported public libraries, and that according to the estimate of the Library Commission two million people within the state were without library privi-